

REMARKS

Entry of the foregoing, reexamination and reconsideration of the subject application are respectfully requested in light of the amendments above and the comments which follow.

As correctly noted in the Office Action Summary, claims 1-24 and 27-39 were pending. By the present response, claims 1-10, 21, 23, 24, 27, 30, 33, 35, 37 and 38 have been amended, claims 32, 34 and 36 have been canceled. Thus, upon entry of the present response, claims 1-24, 27-31, 32-33, 34-35, and 37-39 remain pending and await further consideration on the merits.

Support for the foregoing amendments can be found, for example, in at least the following locations in the original disclosure: paragraphs [00011], [00013], [00014], [00030], [00036], [00044], Figure 1, and the original claims.

Applicants wish to thank Examiner Handy for the courtesies extended to applicants' representative during a personal interview conducted on July 13, 2009 in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, as well as subsequent discussions via telephone conference on July 20, 2009. During the interview, and subsequent discussion, agreement was reached that the foregoing claim amendments would serve to distinguish the presently claimed invention over the prior art of record, and render the application in condition for allowance. Applicants thank the Examiner for his careful attention given to the present application, and the helpful and constructive suggestions put forward to place the application in condition for allowance.

CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-7, 9-21, 23 and 27-39 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over EP 0 651 306 to Dellacoma et al. (hereafter "*Dellacoma et al.*") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,778,917 to Jansen (hereafter "*Jansen*") on the grounds set forth in paragraph 5 of the Official Action. For at least the reasons noted below, this rejection should be withdrawn.

As noted above, agreement has been reached that the foregoing claim amendments serve to distinguish the claims of the present application over the combination of *Dellacoma et al.* with *Jansen*. Applicants believe that the amended claims are distinguishable over *Dellacoma et al.* in view of *Jansen* for at least the same reasons already of record. Thus, withdrawal of the rejection and indication of the allowability of the foregoing claims is respectfully requested.

Claims 8, 22 and 24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Dellacoma et al.* in view of *Jansen*, and further in view of WO 02/073142 and U.S. Patent No. 7,206,664 to Schmid (hereafter "*Schmid*") on the grounds set forth in paragraph 6 of the Official Action.

As previously noted, the foregoing claim amendments serve to distinguish the presently claimed invention over the proposed combination of *Dellacoma et al.*, *Jansen*, and *Schmid*. Applicants believe that the foregoing claims are distinguishable over the applied prior art for at least the same reasons already of record. Thus, withdrawal of the rejection and indication of allowability of claims 8, 22 and 24 is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

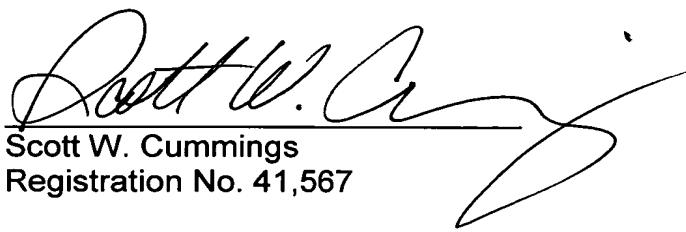
From the foregoing, further and favorable action in the form of a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner feel that any issues remain, it is requested that the undersigned be contacted so that any such issues may be adequately addressed and prosecution of the instant application expedited.

Respectfully submitted,

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